THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV A): (a) No, Sir. The commitment made by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to the Ministry of Labour (MOL) is to install an integrated Local Area Network (LAN) in Shram Shakti Bhavan by the end of the financial year 1995-96. This LAN will be accessible to all the Sections. A common facility in the NIC-MOL Computer Centre with 28 terminals has already been installed for access by all the Sections.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Quantum of Direct and Indirect Trade with Pakistan

2046. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minsiter of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the quantum of direct trade with Pakistan is negligible as compared to the indirect trade which is routed through third countries like Singapore;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have given thought to the idea that the volume of trade with Pakistan can be multiplied many times if the direct land route to Pakistan is contemplated; and

(d) if so, what action is proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINSITER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) No reliable assessment of indirect trade between India and Pakistan routed through third countries is possible to be made. Direct trade between the two countries, however, cannot be described as negligible, being Rs. 338 cr. in 1993-94 and Rs. 344 cr. in 1994-95.

(c) and (d) Trade between India and Pakistan is already operated, amongst others, by rail route. The Govememnt have proposed to Pakistan to reopen another rail route, but Pakistan has not yet responded.

Price Differentials between Retail and Wholesale price of Essential Commodities

2047. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the recent price differentials on per Kg. basis, between the wholesale and retail prices of essential commodities in the metropolitan cities;

(b) whether any guidelines have been framed with regard to the maximum permissible price differential between the wholesale and retail prices of essential commodities;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the manner in which the Ministry monitors the price behaviour of essential commodities particularly at the retail level so as to protect the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DEPTT. OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (SHRI VENOD SHARMA): (a) A Statement is given below:

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) The price differentials between the wholesale and retail prices could be attributed to the overall demand and supply position of a particular commodity in the market, inclusion of retailers' margin and cost of transportation etc. The prices of selected essential commodities are beign monitored on a daily basis. The daily retail prices of essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, arhar dal, gram dal,